

Family Carers Briefing

Expertise and Knowledge of Health and Social Care Staff about Learning Disability and Autism



Everyone will be aware of the challenges and changes that have faced the health and social care sector over recent years. Families told us that staff changes, cuts and new systems meant that much of the expertise, knowledge and understanding available had been lost.



What this offers however is an increased opportunity for family carers to be fully recognised as the experts within the care of their loved one, with much experience and knowledge to offer those working to support them.



Family carers highlighted the importance of trust and honesty in their relationships with health and social care staff. Accessing the right information remains difficult, with much of this being online and complex to navigate. Family carers often have to rely on these staff to provide this accurate, timely information.



Work in this area...

Rachael Black, a postgraduate research student at the University of Sheffield, has been working with a group of family carers to look at how to improve the communication between health and social care professionals and families. Information about their project has been sent out with this bulletin.



Named Social Worker Programme:

Over the past 2 years some areas have looked at adopting a named social worker approach. This aims to provide people with a learning disability, autism or both, and their families, with greater consistency of the worker allocated to oversee their support. Through this it is hoped social workers have a greater opportunity to get to know and understand the needs of the individual. For more information go to:

www.scie.org.uk/social-work/named-social-worker



Learning Disability Partnership Boards

provide an opportunity for individuals with a learning disability, autism or both, and family carers to connect with health and social care practitioners to inform their thinking and influence service developments. Working together to share best practice, highlight gaps or difficulties and seek solutions to these together. Your local Council website will have details of the Partnership Board if there is one in your area.



Top tip:

Family carers recommended having a brief 'history' profile prepared which can be used by new support staff to help understand a person's needs, interests, skills etc. and avoid families having to repeat the same information time and time again.

There may be opportunities to get involved in educating and training the people who work in health and social care in your area. Doing this can have a real impact on their understanding of how to work well with families.

Resources:



The Learning Disabilities Core Skills Education and Training Framework sets out the skills and knowledge adult social care workers need to deliver high quality care and support for people with a learning disability. Know what is expected by taking a look at the document here:

<http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/images/resource-section/projects/learning-disabilities/Learning-Disabilities-CSTF.pdf>



The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has recently published a guide for the **Care and Support of people growing older with learning disabilities**. The purpose of this is to support people to access the services they need as they get older and

includes recommendations as to the skills and expertise of staff.

For further information go to:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng96>

SPELL is **The National Autistic Society's** framework for understanding and responding to the needs of children and adults on the autism spectrum. It focuses on five principles that have been identified as key elements of best practice in autism. For more information go to:

<http://www.autism.org.uk/about/strategies/spell.aspx>

The Law:

Good care and support by knowledgeable, skilled and understanding staff will also respect the requirements of the following legislation:



Equality Act

www.gov.uk/government/publications/easy-read-the-equality-act-making-equality-real



Human Rights Act

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/human-rights-act-learning-disabilities.pdf>



Care Act

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-2014-part-1-factsheets/care-act-factsheets>



Mental Capacity Act

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support/mental-capacity/>

